4/21/70

Dear Dick,

writing the enclosed to Howard was not easy and I feel he may take it hard, as he should. That was perhaps he will learn. The temptation to show off to a man who to him is so expert and learned was, of course, great for one so young. My liking for Howard is undiminished, but I'd never have trusted him as I have if I'd know he would tereafter start communication with everyone in the world, including those who have made themselves my enemies and especially two who have set about sustematically stealing whatever they could.

I take certain things I have not indicated from that part Howard has communicated and what I'd known, some of which is in my letter to him. Some of them can be very hurtful to us. Do not underestimate John's ego or its and his capabilities, especially when he is caught at his dishonesty, which he will not admit to himself is dishonesty. One clue I'll give you is the possibility he may have his own strange way of proving, especially to himself, that he is not dishonest.

Another can be reflected by the possibility he was not dissembling to Howard when he indicated ignorance of the content of the books he allegedly read just the day before.

If I tell you no more, it is because I want you to reach your own conclusions, if any, and not to feed what I see as possibilities back to me. I have, I think, given you only hints.

Do you think John needed a hotel room to see Howard? Did he go to Phila for any reason other than to see Howard?

If he was not east for some scientific gathering or anyother similar thing, then I would read more into all of this. Did he, for example, take this time, spend this money, just to see my books, one of which he had read not less than twice by his own letters, and to see Howard? Of course, he may also have been at the Archives. I'll learn that, in time, if he was.

However, the chief reason for this letter is that I have to take my wife to town and I want to mail the letter to Howard immediately. This and Skolnick at the same time are not good. Because of his liking for and respect for you, he may write you about my letter. If he does, please assure him of what he may want to know, that I have told you my liking for him and my respect for him and what he has done are undiminished even though I am disappointed that he has made problems needlessly and after being forewarned. We just cannot isolate ourselves from each other and we can and must learn to respect the confidences of others and to learn not to trust those we know we cannot. You should realize that John was telling Howard nothing that wasn't known save that picture, but he impressed him with the impression he was sharing secrets and treating him as an equal. At 16, how could Howard not be overwhelmed? So, you see why I told him I thought it best he have no intercourse with Lifton, where he has an excellent prospect of doing the same wrong things. One of the problems bestowed by a high intelligence and an earned confidence in it is the concomitant overconfidence that often exists. But God, what an awful drain on my time and life for the recent years it has been trying to forestall so many of these things and then to try and minimize them!

Sincerely,